

12/20/06

Hello, I am a mental health crisis therapist, and I specialize in working with individuals who are suicidal. I contract for two small rural counties to provide this necessary service, and while we have our own local services, our clients rely on the availability of national resources, such as the 1-800-SUICIDE hotline. This is an especially difficult time of year for people going through depression and suicidality, due to a number of factors, such as shortening days, overcast weather, and the emotional burdens that the holidays present to those who have a history of trauma, abuse, and strained family relationships—usually typical characteristics in individuals who are suicidal. I usually provide services for more individuals during the holiday months than any other months. Not only is this a crucial and imperative service which SAVES LIVES, but this is a most crucial time of year for those who will need these services. I implore you to not use this funding stream as an opportunity to reduce spending! I know in my line of work, when I go to bed at night, I must know that I have done everything I can to make sure that the people I serve will still be alive tomorrow, then I will not have the burden on my conscious of not having done enough to help them. I am sure you would not want that burden either.

Sincerely,

Jessica Elshafie, MSW